

Taking Care of Yourself

As a teacher, you probably think more about the needs of others than your own needs. Your days are filled with giving. You share your knowledge, skills, and experience so your students can be their best. And they look up to you, absorbing like a sponge, everything you teach them. 😊 Ok, that may be an idealistic stretch, but they do watch you closely and often learn more than the lessons you're trying to teach. So, what if your eating and exercise habits are not the best examples of what your students should be learning? Well, no one is perfect, and that in itself is a lesson, but we can all strive to improve, one step at a time. Use the tips in ***Your Personal Path to Health: Steps to a Healthier You!*** to start you on your way.

For a more detailed look at nutrition and fitness, check out the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines are published every 5 years, and provide advice about how good dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. New messages in the 2005 edition are:

- Eat more fruits & vegetables
- Eat more grains – half should be whole
- Use more low fat or fat free dairy products
- Limit total fat to 25-35% of calories
- Limit saturated and trans fat
- Eat 2 or more servings of fish per week
- Consume less than 2300 mg sodium per day
- Decrease processed foods
- Balance food intake with physical activity
- Get physical activity – at least 60 minutes per day for children; 30 minutes per day for adults. Physical activity should increase heart rate, but also include stretching for flexibility, and resistance for strength and endurance
- Keep food safe to eat
- Make improvements gradually over time

“Example isn't another way to teach, it is the only way to teach.”

Albert Einstein

Chapters in the Dietary Guidelines document include Weight Management, Physical Activity, Fats, Carbohydrates, Food Groups to Encourage, and more. See the Resource section of this kit for a link to this document.

Taking care of yourself not only sets a good example for your students, a healthy diet also enhances the efficiency of your immune system, increases energy, and improves your mental and emotional ability to control stress.... All very important in your role as a teacher. The *Extreme Health Challenge* provides a great opportunity for you to teach by example as you participate with your students in the physical activity and fruit and vegetable challenges.